

(Washington, DC) –U.S. Reps. Rush Holt (NJ-12) and Rosa DeLauro (CT-3) today successfully amended the American Clean Energy and Security Act to authorize a research program into what drives consumer actions on energy use, in order to provide evidence-based understanding of how to achieve wiser energy usage.

Current research points to the need to reexamine the goals and assumptions behind energy saving education programs. A recent poll from Rutgers University demonstrates that an individual's opinion on climate change has little relationship to the way that they use energy. Further research has shown that individuals are unlikely to buy more expensive products or make expensive upgrades even if they are aware of the long term savings they could receive on their energy bills by making these improvements.

"While changing consumer behavior offers a promising opportunity to promote energy independence and reduce greenhouse gas emissions, there is still much to be learned about the forces that drive consumer actions," Holt said. "Our amendment would help to understand not only how consumers use energy, it would allow us to develop better incentives for individuals to reduce their energy consumption and their greenhouse gas emissions."

"To effectively encourage people to reduce their energy use, we need to understand what motivates their actions," said DeLauro. "This study will allow us to better understand those motivations and develop more effective incentives to encourage greater energy efficiency and decrease pollution. In doing so, we will maximize our investment in energy efficiency programs and importantly, significantly increase the cost-savings for consumers."

Currently, there is no program within the Department of Energy to determine what drives consumer behavior so that we can better encourage individuals to take advantage of energy saving behaviors and technologies.

#

